

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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R 041443Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2362

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

USCINCSO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, OAS, HO

SUBJ: VISIT OF OAS SECRETARY-GENERAL TO HONDURAS

REF: TEGUCIGALPA 0501 (DTG 301421Z JAN 76)

BEGIN SUMMARY: OAS SECRETARY-GENERAL ORFILA VISITED HONDURAS FOR A THREE DAY VISIT WHICH CONCLUDED ON JANUARY 30. DURING THAT PERIOD, HE HAD INTERVIEWS WITH THE CHIEF OF STATE AND REPRESENTATIVES OF MOST OF THE IMPORTANT SECTORS OF HONDURAN SOCIETY. HE PRESENTED A POSSIBLE PROCEDURE FOR REACHING AN AGREEMENT TO THE EL SALVADOR-HONDURAS DISPUTE THAT INVOLVED A DEMARCATION OF THE BORDER AREAS NOT IN DISPUTE WITH A SUBSEQUENT OPENING OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. HE WAS CRITICIZED BY POLITICAL PARTY LEADERS AND SOME PAPERS AS BEING PARTIAL TO EL SALVADOR AT THE EXPENSE OF HONDURAN NATIONAL INTERESTS. END SUMMARY.

1. OAS SECRETARY-GENERAL ALEJANDRO ORFILA CONCLUDED A THREE-DAY VISIT TO HONDURAS ON JANUARY 30. DURING THE VISIT, HE MET WITH CHIEF OF STATE MELGAR, THE COUNCIL OF UNCLASSIFIED

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MINISTERS, THE SUPREME COURT, JOURNALISTS AND POLITICAL

PARTY LEADERS. HE WAS INTERVIEWED ON MANY OCCASIONS BY THE PRESS AND WAS REPEATEDLY QUESTIONED ABOUT HIS VIEWS ON THE HONDURAS/EL SALVADOR DISPUTE AND ON THE ROLE OF THE OAS.

2. AS REPORTED REFTTEL, HIS FLIGHT TO TEGUCIGALPA ABOARD A PLANE PILOTED BY FONMIN BORGONOVO EXCITED A GREAT DEAL OF COMMENT. HE SPENT THE MAJOR PART OF HIS TIME TALKING ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF HONDURAS AND EL SALVADOR COMING TO AN AGREEMENT. IN ALL HIS PRESS COMMENTS ABOUT THE DISPUTE, ORFILA STATED THAT THE OAS WAS PREPARED TO HELP IN ANY WAY POSSIBLE. HE ALSO TOOK PAINS TO EMPHASIZE WHAT HE VIEWED AS THE DESIRE AND GOOD-WILL OF THE OFFICIALS OF BOTH COUNTRIES CONCERNING A SETTLEMENT.

3. ORFILA TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLAIN TO THE LEADERS OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES ABOUT HIS VIEWS IN REGARD TO RESOLUTION OF THE DISPUTE. HE TOLD THE POLITICAL LEADERS THAT EL SALVADOR WAS READY TO START NEGOTIATIONS WITH HONDURAS BY DEMARCATING THOSE AREAS ALONG THE BORDER NOT IN DISPUTE AND NEGOTIATE AT A LATER DATE TO SETTLE THE REMAINING DISPUTED AREAS. HE SAID THAT THE SECOND STEP WOULD BE TO ESTABLISH DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS, OPEN THE PAN AMERICAN HIGHWAY AND DEAL WITH THE OTHER MATTERS INVOLVED IN A FINAL PEACE TREATY. HE POINTED OUT THAT IN A GOOD NEGOTIATION NO ONE IS THE "WINNER" OR "LOSER," BUT RATHER THAT BOTH ACHIEVE THE BEST POSSIBLE RESULT. SUBSEQUENTLY, VARIOUS POLITICAL PARTY LEADERS, SUCH AS RICARDO ZUNIGA AUGUSTINUS OF THE NATIONALIST PARTY AND MODESTO RODAS ALVARADO OF THE LIBERAL PARTY, SAID THEY WERE NOT IN FAVOR OF SUCH A PROCEDURE AND ADVOCATED MAINTENANCE OF THE TRADITIONAL HONDURAN POLICY OF A "GLOBAL AND SIMULTANEOUS" RESOLUTION OF THE DISPUTE. A FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER, TIBURCIO CARIAS CASTILLO, ALSO PUBLICLY EXPRESSED HIS FEARS THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS MOVING AWAY FROM THE DOCTRINE OF A GLOBAL AND SIMULTANEOUS SETTLE-

MENT WHICH HE HAD ESTABLISHED IN 1969.

4. COMMENT: ORFILA'S VISIT AND PUBLIC COMMENTS HAVE STIMULATED PUBLIC INTEREST IN A POSSIBLE RESOLUTION OF THE DISPUTE. HIS PRESENTATION OF THE "SALVADORAN POINT OF VIEW" TO THE UNCLASSIFIED

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POLITICAL PARTIES HAS BEEN CRITICIZED BY SOME POLITICAL LEADERS AND SOME PAPERS AS BEING PARTIAL TO EL SALVADOR AT THE EXPENSE OF HONDURAS. WHILE IT IS RECOGNIZED HE HAS A JUSTIFIABLE INTEREST IN SEEING THE DISPUTE RESOLVED, THERE IS AN UNDERLYING FEELING IN SOME QUARTERS THAT HE WOULD BE WILLING TO SACRIFICE HONDURAN INTERESTS IN ORDER TO SEE A SETTLEMENT THAT WOULD BE A TRIUMPH FOR ORFILA PERSONALLY

AND FOR THE OAS AS AN ORGANIZATION.
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